

Suggested Pension Payment Corrections

upon which you and I were able to build a better society and in which we are now able to obtain larger returns for ourselves.

In this connection I could refer to my own family but I do not think it would be correct to do so. However, I would like to refer to the agricultural industry of western Canada at the time when many of our pioneers moved into that part of the country. It was at that time raw land. Many of these people had no money when they went to the west. They broke the land by the sweat of their brow and the labour of their muscles and established small farms or businesses. But when they died or grew old they had not accumulated the large estates that people have in this day and age. They did not save too much money because of the small incomes earned in those days. But I know from my own experience and that of those around me that these people built something on which others could build further.

• (5:30 p.m.)

What reward are we giving them for their efforts? They endured hardships the like of which you and I never experienced. They suffered much and did without much so that they could put capital into the country. What reward do they get? A pension which is inadequate, which is grudgingly given. Today, in the twilight of their lives they are trying to get by under awkward conditions in many cases.

I should like to tell hon. members about something I saw one day this year in the City of Saskatoon. I remember an old lady living by herself in a small one-room apartment. She was not well. Her clothes were hung on the back of the door. All she had to live on was her pension. I ask hon. members: would you want to live like this? Would you want your own parents to live under such conditions? My own wish, and I am sure it is shared by others here, is that these people should receive pensions sufficient to enable them to live in dignity and decency for the rest of their lives. I suggest we have enough wealth in Canada today to enable us to look after these people properly.

I could become quite indignant about the situation in which some people find themselves in the absence of adequate incomes. I am thinking of people who for one reason or another are unable to make it, often people with no family to care about them, in a country which does not care enough. I believe we should do something in a constructive fashion to see that at least in a financial sense these

[Mr. Thomson.]

people are adequately rewarded. We should recognize the effort they have put into the country in times past by doing our best to ensure that the pensions they receive are adequate to meet the cost of living.

Mr. Barney Danson (York-North): Mr. Speaker, I had no intention to speak in this debate but I was moved by the remarks of the two previous speakers, and perhaps with good reason. The hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau) mentioned that those who run this country, the people from Upper Canada, should see the rest of the country. I was tempted to rise there and then on a question of privilege, but I did not.

An hon. Member: Why didn't you?

Mr. Danson: First, because so far I am not running the country. But I do think it is unfortunate to suggest that people who come from what was once called Upper Canada are not concerned. Indeed, I think it is unfortunate that people who come from central Canada should be referred to, today, as Upper Canadians, unless they went to a particular school.

I have lived in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and British Columbia as well as Ontario.

An hon. Member: Why did you leave British Columbia?

Mr. Danson: I have asked myself that question. It is a most beautiful part of the country. I almost went back there after the war, but things did not pan out. I always enjoy visiting there. We should make it our business to travel. It is true disparities exist. They are not pleasant for anyone to face. But I must say I also have a letter here from the Chairman of the Corporation of Metropolitan Toronto who said we were not doing enough for our own area. Of course, he was not suggesting for a moment that we should not do things for other areas. We all benefit by this. If the people of Nova Scotia or of New Brunswick are not prosperous, then neither are we in Upper Canada. Not only are they our market but they are our people and our brothers. We, as Canadians, have a great interest in seeing that prosperity spreads across the country. I agree the answers are not easy. The hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. Thomson) mentioned the contribution the older people have made to the development of this country. This concerns me, because as I go through an election campaign or, indeed, through my own riding, I hear